Chief Executives Board for Coordination

11 May 2018

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-fifth session

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 9 and 10 April 2018)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-fifth session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 9 and 10 April 2018. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II.

2. In opening the session, the Chair of the Committee, Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), recalled that the Committee had pursued forward-looking initiatives on "frontier" challenges from the perspective of system-wide policy coordination and programmatic coherence since its initial examination of global megatrends at its thirty-third session. With a view to providing inputs to the deliberations of CEB in November 2017 on the implications of rapidly developing new technologies, the Committee had, at its thirty-fourth session, carried out analyses of the opportunities and challenges posed by frontier technologies, with a particular focus on artificial intelligence, cyberspace, biotechnology and new weaponry, and considered value-added entry points for United Nations system engagement.

3. Both the Committee and CEB underscored the transformative power of technologies for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, while recognizing that technologies could exacerbate inequalities and leave the most marginalized further behind. The United Nations had a distinct role in supporting countries, especially the poorest, in harnessing the benefits of new technologies for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in providing an ethical voice and serving as a moral compass for safeguarding universal norms and values, and in minimizing the destabilizing effects of technological innovation.

4. CEB, in conclusion, decided to pursue United Nations system engagement on new technologies through a multi-tiered road map and in that context tasked the Committee with undertaking system-wide "deep-dive" analyses on the power of technologies and innovation in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At its thirty-fifth session, the Committee focused on four distinct yet closely interlinked frontier issues: artificial intelligence, the future of work, the future of learning and education, and the future of food. The intent was to provide substantive inputs to the consideration by CEB in May 2018 of the socioeconomic implications of the so-called fourth industrial revolution.

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United Nations engagement on frontier technologies

II. Contributions of the High-level Committee on Programmes to United Nations engagement on frontier technologies

5. The Chair recalled that CEB had, at its previous session, agreed to pursue a coordinated and multilayered road map for United Nations system engagement on frontier technologies and in this context tasked the Committee with undertaking system-wide deep-dive analyses to build collective knowledge of the impact of new technologies on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to place such efforts in the context of the broader initiative, the Committee was invited to consider the best way to contribute to the implementation of the road map, in particular with a view to identifying the perspectives and approaches that should guide its analytical work, as well as additional deep-dive themes that could merit system-wide examination in the future.

6. The Secretary of CEB, Simona Petrova, noting the Secretary-General's vision for CEB as a strategic policy forum, stated that the Board would address technological and operational innovation at its forthcoming session, in May 2018, with a view to arriving at a common view on measures to systematically foster innovation in the United Nations system. The Committee's analyses on the impact of technologies and innovation on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals would be an important input that would facilitate and stimulate the deliberations of the Board.

7. Ayaka Suzuki (Executive Office of the Secretary-General) outlined the key foreseen tenets of the Secretary-General's strategy on new technologies, which was currently under development. Guided by five fundamental principles, namely, universal values, inclusion and transparency, multi-stakeholder partnerships, existing capacities and humility, the strategy would set out a number of areas for action by the United Nations system with the aim of enhancing its capacity, strengthening advocacy and dialogue, supporting the development of a normative cooperation framework and providing capacity-building support to Member States.

8. Robert Opp (World Food Programme), who co-chairs the United Nations Innovation Network, focused on the role of the United Nations as a catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring that no one was left behind in the face of exponential change driven by technological development and innovation. Calling for the adoption of a new mindset, Mr. Opp suggested ways to do things differently in the policy and analytical work relevant to the Committee, including by listening to new voices, inviting external expertise into the United Nations through partnerships, integrating greater flexibility into policies and strategies and being willing to take risks.

9. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee recognized the need for greater creativity and innovation and a humble-yet-bold mindset in the work of the United Nations system. The Committee also pointed to several cross-cutting concerns that needed to guide the analytical work of the United Nations on frontier issues. Members emphasized the need for more focused attention by the United Nations system on norms and value-driven considerations related to frontier technologies and technological innovation. United Nations values and universal norms, a hallmark of the international system, needed to inform the process of creating innovation as well as the application thereof. A suggestion was made to explore the development of a common framework, akin to a social compact, to guide the work of the United Nations in this area.

10. Leaving no one behind was an important normative paradigm that needed to be consistently upheld by the United Nations system to help to minimize the risk of new technologies deepening existing inequalities and biases. The ethics of artificial intelligence was a central concern that needed to be addressed holistically from the perspectives of human rights, gender equality, accessibility, inclusiveness and data privacy. The Committee was informed that, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a process was under way to address the issue. Members observed that a variety of entry points for engagement on emerging challenges were accessible to the United Nations system and that various United Nations platforms needed to be utilized to the maximum effect.

11. Partnerships, in particular with the private sector, were seen as a critical component of any system-wide approach on frontier technologies and innovation. Some members were of the view that, to engage effectively with private sector partners, the United Nations system needed to be less overly risk averse, while other members called for responsible partnerships based on appropriate due diligence requirements.

12. There was broad agreement that staff capacities to innovate, create, forge partnerships and respond to new challenges and opportunities needed to be strengthened, and links to ongoing work under the auspices of the High-level Committee on Management were recognized in this context. Some members called for greater sharing among United Nations system entities of best practices on the application of new technologies and innovation in the work of the United Nations in order to learn from each other. Drawing on the innovation potentials at the country level, integrating new voices, in particular those of young people, and creating institutional spaces and capacity to experiment were seen as particularly important in this regard. As such, innovating, which was defined by one participant as "mastering the art of staying relevant", required an urgent change in the culture and mindset of the United Nations system.

13. Given the widespread, interlinked and complex impact of new technologies, the need to prioritize, focus and target future analytical efforts of the High-level Committee on Programmes was emphasized. Some suggested that the best way to approach this might be to focus on, for example, a specific socioeconomic angle or certain vulnerability. Such factors as market capitalization and the combined impact of numerous new technologies were also mentioned as a lens through which to prioritize future analytical topics, with the imperative of leaving no one behind as the key overarching perspective.

14. Bearing in mind the perspectives and factors described above as critical to the consideration of frontier challenges, the Committee identified a number of additional deep-dive themes that would potentially merit system-wide examination in the future, including demographic shifts and transitions, the role of new technologies in rapid urbanization, the implications of frontier technologies on developing countries with a focus on the "bottom billion", the impact of new technologies on persons with disabilities, the implications of genetic engineering, data privacy, data security and digital identity, and the potentials of blockchain, cryptocurrencies and e-commerce.

15. In response to the issues raised, the presenters underscored the role and responsibility of the leadership of the United Nations system in encouraging a culture of creativity and innovation. The development of a system-wide approach to partnerships was recommended as a timely and effective measure to address some of the normative and operational concerns raised by members of the Committee.

Conclusion

16. **The Chair requested the secretariat of the Committee to ensure that the concrete themes, ideas and approaches suggested were appropriately taken into account in the Committee's future work.**

Deep-dive analyses on frontier issues

III. Artificial intelligence

17. In introducing the agenda item, the Chair referred to the discussions during the thirty-fourth session of the Committee, at which it had been stressed that the complex multidimensional impact of technological breakthroughs, such as artificial intelligence, needed to be addressed through an integrated, cross-sectoral and collaborative approach that mobilized and engaged the entire United Nations system. In line with the subsequent guidance from CEB, the Committee's efforts were now focused on enhancing, through system-wide policy coherence and programmatic coordination, artificial intelligence-related capacity-building support in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. Doreen Bogdan-Martin (International Telecommunication Union) presented a discussion paper on artificial intelligence and capacity development, prepared in consultation with interested United Nations entities and in collaboration with the Berkman Klein Centre for Internet and Society. Building upon the discussion paper considered at the thirty-fourth session, this new paper aimed to examine the implications of artificial intelligence on the Sustainable Development Goals and outline the opportunity for constructing coordinated system-wide positions and engagement in developing the artificial intelligence capacities of Member States.

19. The paper explored ways to scale up capacity-building in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, harnessing the positive elements of the transformative powers of artificial intelligence in a manner that benefits humanity equally and leaves no one behind. Divided into five sections, the paper highlighted ways in which the United Nations could help to build capacity around artificial intelligence and advocate a people-centred and inclusive approach that would ultimately advance artificial intelligence in the global public interest and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper considered the main building blocks required for such efforts, noting that, while many were already part of ongoing United Nations capacity development efforts, artificial intelligence was making such efforts ever more critical and urgent. Five broad substantive areas of capacity development were identified to address the unique challenges of artificial intelligence technologies and advance the Sustainable Development Goals, and concrete steps were proposed towards developing system-wide engagement.

20. Turning to the question of the role of the United Nations system, Ms. Bogdan-Martin noted that many United Nations system entities were already engaged in various aspects of artificial intelligence, including normative and operational support and the internal application of artificial intelligence technology for effective mandate delivery. While not the biggest player in the field, the United Nations system was perceived as having an important role to play in ensuring that the development and application of such technology benefited humanity, was anchored by universal norms and standards, and supported sustainable development and peace.

21. To this end, the paper outlined a three-step approach towards developing United Nations system-wide engagement on capacity-building, as follows: (a) develop a common United Nations system position and shared guiding principles on artificial

intelligence technologies that would help to define the internal strategic direction of the United Nations system in its assistance to Member States; (b) on the basis of the guiding principles, articulate a system-wide framework on artificial intelligence technologies in order to encourage and guide integrated action within the United Nations system; and (c) on the basis of this system-wide framework, elaborate recommendations and concrete actions towards a capacity-building programme for developing countries.

22. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee reaffirmed its strong commitment to pursuing coordinated system-wide engagement on this important issue and expressed support for the three-step approach proposed to that end. Members noted, however, that the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence technologies required expedited progress across the three steps and suggested an extra complementary step of pursuing, in parallel, deep-dive examinations of broader yet relevant issues to inform and enrich this and other ongoing initiatives. For example, given the need to deepen the understanding of the implications of artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies specifically for developing countries, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development offered to contribute an analysis. The need to consider and integrate lessons from past system-wide efforts was also mentioned.

23. Praising the high quality of the analysis contained in the paper, the Committee expressed particular appreciation for its focus on social equity and the pledge of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. While recognizing the political complexity of the spheres in which artificial intelligence operates, members highlighted the potential role that the United Nations system could play in fostering a social compact approach and closing the artificial intelligence divide to improve alignment with universal values and standards.

24. Suggestions for additional capacity-building elements were offered. Members recognized that national digital development strategies needed to have close links to national sustainable development strategies in order to drive the artificial intelligence capacities of countries. The Committee underscored the importance of linking future artificial intelligence-related activities to existing intergovernmental processes and platforms, as well as to the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system. It was noted that the use of targeted artificial intelligence could help to fill unpopulated indicators and contribute to the work of the Statistical Commission and national statistical offices, as well as in connection with the work in preparation for the national voluntary presentations at the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

25. Notwithstanding the universal scope of the need for artificial intelligence capacity development, the Committee noted that South-South cooperation and regional and subregional dimensions needed to be given greater recognition, paired with enhanced references to economic dimensions, resource implications, taxation systems and investments. Several members noted that this initiative could contribute to the prevention of violent conflicts through innovative and whole-of-society means of mining data. More explicit references to data privacy safeguards and confidentiality, access to disaggregated unbiased data and capacity for digital identification at the national level were also suggested.

26. The Committee noted the importance of presenting a stronger position on the role and responsibility of the private sector in relation to the use of artificial intelligence and the principles that should guide such engagement. Members exchanged views on the impact stemming from enhanced United Nations engagement on artificial intelligence and the potential influence thereof on disrupting or shifting the current perception of artificial intelligence towards a public good produced and utilized to benefit humanity. The need for the development of technologies to protect

artificial intelligence applications from absorbing human biases (such as racial, gender, age and nationality) was emphasized, as was the need to ensure clear lines of accountability for harm caused by such technologies.

27. In conclusion, the Committee reaffirmed that the complex multidimensional nature of artificial intelligence necessitated an integrated system-wide approach and agreed to pursue it through the three-step approach proposed in the paper at an expedited pace through an iterative process. The Committee also recognized the dynamic nature of this topic and its close link to the Committee's other deep-dive analytical efforts.

Conclusion

28. **The Committee decided to proceed, in as accelerated a manner as possible, with the three-step approach to pursue United Nations system-wide engagement on artificial intelligence capacity development, and requested the International Telecommunication Union, in cooperation with interested agencies and taking into account the comments made, to present a draft system-wide framework for the Committee's consideration at its thirty-sixth session. The Committee also agreed to explore in parallel additional complementary analyses on key relevant issues to inform and enrich this and other ongoing initiatives.**

IV. Future of work

29. The Chair recalled that, at its previous session, the Committee, in discussing the implications of new technologies, had seen value in developing a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach to supporting Member States in building policy frameworks to shape the future of work in the context of supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and had requested ILO to lead an inter-agency process to produce a proposal to this end. At the thirty-fifth session, the Committee was expected to provide feedback on the outline of the draft strategy.

30. Sangheon Lee (ILO) introduced the discussion note, which had been prepared by ILO in collaboration with 12 entities. Recalling the Committee's previous discussions on this subject, Mr. Lee outlined the proposed guiding principles, building blocks and elements for United Nations system efforts as a basis for a United Nations system-wide strategy to realize "the future of work we want". Soliciting the Committee's views and guidance on the further development of the strategy, he invited members to comment on the United Nations vision for the future of work, the actions that the United Nations system could take to advance that vision, building upon the wide range of initiatives already under way across the system, and the innovation that might be required within United Nations organizations to effectively implement the strategy.

31. Members welcomed the proposal, broadly agreeing with the analysis and recommendations contained in the paper. The Committee supported the proposed structure and content of the system-wide strategy, which was expected to bolster the ability of United Nations system entities to generate appropriate policy guidance and programmes reflecting new employment trends, as well as to help to mitigate and manage the impact of technology on jobs, averting the much-publicized doomsday scenarios. The importance of anchoring the strategy in the Sustainable Development Goals and United Nations norms and standards was emphasized, as was the need to ensure that the interrelationships among the Goals were well reflected through an integrated and multisectoral approach that facilitated coordinated United Nations system action and promoted a whole-government response, with a key role for the education sector.

32. In order to address inequality, the strategy would have to help to prevent the vulnerable, especially women and girls, refugees, stateless persons, the rural poor, older persons and others less likely to have access to modern technologies, from being left behind in the future world of work. From the outset, it would be helpful to examine who was most at risk, in particular those losing their livelihoods to automation, to ensure that the strategy would target the furthest behind first. The Committee was nevertheless mindful that the least developed countries were not likely to experience the effects of the fourth industrial revolution in the near term and noted therefore that the United Nations system must continue to support traditional development models in the meantime.

33. It was stressed that the strategy should promote the equitable sharing of technological dividends across society, rather than benefiting only a small segment. Indeed, it was observed that the threat of unprecedented power asymmetry was real and, if left unfettered, would undermine the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, it was suggested that the United Nations should take a position to help to prevent such an outcome. More broadly, the role of the United Nations as an advocate and defender of norms and standards, in particular labour rights, also needed to feature prominently in the strategy.

34. Good-quality work was seen as a priority, and, in this regard, members underscored the need for the strategy to address the growing informal economy as well as the formal economy. Improving the quality of informal work would also be instrumental in achieving other development goals.

35. Members supported social aspects, including the human right to an adequate standard of living, the social value of work and the gender dimension, being reflected more strongly in the principles and implementation elements. Strengthening social protection systems, which in the recent past had been increasingly delinked from employment, was identified by the Committee as a key action to combat inequality and advance the Sustainable Development Goals, including the exploration of alternative models such as the universal basic income, recognizing that new models, such as the gig economy and the sharing economy, offered workers little security or protection. Among other concerns, potential negative health effects were also highlighted, as informal and gig workers generally lacked health insurance and did not benefit from occupational health provisions. It was acknowledged, however, that remote work had the potential to provide employment opportunities and new economic horizons to individuals without their having to relocate, which had important implications for migration.

36. Members stressed the need for the strategy to promote greater investment in human capital, especially in young people, who the Committee acknowledged should be at the heart of the discussion on the future of work. The strategy needed to take into consideration demographic trends and offer young men and women better prospects, with benefits for both the young South and the ageing North.

37. Recognizing the close connection between this effort and the concurrent Committee work on the future of learning and education, the Committee observed that the changing nature of work and the creation of new, as yet unknown industries demanded a corresponding change in formal education to equip future workers with the skills necessary in the transition to the labour market. Vocational training would continue to be relevant in the future world of work and should therefore also be addressed in the strategy. Moreover, it was necessary to provide access to lifelong learning opportunities, including skills acquisition, especially digital skills, for workers already in the labour market. It was emphasized that action by both the public and private sectors was crucial. New fiscal and taxation policies would need to be promoted to fund investment in education and provide social protection.

38. In addition, members suggested enhancing the macroeconomic angle in the implementation elements. It was agreed that research should proceed in parallel to the development of the strategy in order to better inform policy responses. Relevant work was ongoing or planned on a number of topics, including the relationship between capital and labour, the impact of market concentration on productivity, regional impacts, trade policies, and digitalization and fiscal policy, for which the importance was underscored of placing a special focus on the perspectives of developing countries. It was also recommended that regional dynamics be reflected more clearly in the strategy.

39. The political dynamics inherent in the issue were highlighted, and it was suggested that the scope of the strategy might be broadened to reflect those aspects. Specifically, members underscored the links between work and conflict prevention and highlighted that the strategy could help to alleviate some of the shocks that could drive countries into conflict situations. Furthermore, in the context of displacement, it was observed that employment could help to mitigate humanitarian crisis, for example, by restoring the dignity of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons and advancing employment opportunities for them.

40. With regard to the vision for the "future of work we want", members suggested that it emphasize the value of work as an institution with value in and of itself that provides dignity, identity, self-worth, self-determination and an opportunity to contribute to a common enterprise. It could reflect additional aspirations such as full employment, no working poor and decent work. It could not, however, ignore the reality that, as a result of new technologies, the incidence of informal work was increasing and the rights-based approach to employment was being undermined. Given the rapidly evolving and intertwined factors influencing the future of work, the importance of developing stronger foresight capabilities for scenario planning and qualitative analysis was noted.

41. In concluding the item, the Chair recognized that the future of work was being shaped by forces other than technology and the threat of automation, for example, climate change and changing employment models, and that the final strategy would need to take those elements into consideration holistically to ensure a productive transformation for the world of work. He also observed that the course of globalization was growing more uncertain and that future policy choices on the management of the global economy would inevitably have an impact on the future of work.

42. The Chair noted the Committee's support for the proposed outline and approach and requested ILO to reflect members' comments and suggestions in a revised version of the paper that would serve as input to the Board's discussion on the socioeconomic implications of the fourth industrial revolution at its meeting in May 2018. He also requested ILO to work with interested agencies to proceed with developing the full strategy, with a view to finalizing it at the Committee's thirty-seventh session, in due synergy with the centenary initiative of ILO and taking into consideration the Committee's current feedback as well as any guidance to come from CEB.

Conclusion

43. **The Committee supported the analysis and recommendations on the future of work put forward at the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions by the task team led by ILO and approved the proposed outline of the system-wide strategy, subject to the incorporation of comments made during the discussion. The combined work would serve as input to the Board at its upcoming session. The Committee further requested ILO to carry forward the inter-agency process to develop the system-wide strategy, reflecting the Committee's deliberations and**

any guidance that might be provided by CEB, and to report on progress, as relevant, at the Committee's thirty-sixth session.

V. Future of learning and education

44. In introducing the agenda item, the Chair noted that the ongoing analytical work carried out by the Committee on artificial intelligence and the future of work pointed to the critical role of education and learning in guiding societies to adapt. He observed that new technologies could offer an important contribution to reaching those who were left behind by the current education system and enable societies to accelerate towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

45. The Committee's deliberations were informed by a discussion paper prepared jointly by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNESCO in consultation with interested entities. In line with the Board's directive and tailored to the scope of its forthcoming consideration of the impact of the fourth industrial revolution on sustainable development, the paper focused in particular on the transformative power of innovative technologies and the important role of learning and education in preparing current and future generations for the new realities and demands they would create.

46. Jo Bourne (UNICEF) and Jordan Naidoo (UNESCO) introduced the paper, which examined the opportunities for innovative technologies to enhance learning and education and outlined options for mitigating the challenge of innovative technologies for learning and education. The paper contained recommendations for the United Nations system to help to realize an optimal future for learning and education, including: (a) support countries in making the best use of information and communications technology and other innovative technologies for learning and strengthening education systems; (b) emphasize the use of technology to promote learning throughout the life cycle; (c) provide guidance in the use of new and innovative technologies to address the data gaps in education and gain new insights from enhanced data analysis; (d) ensure that Governments are well equipped to manage the risks of the greater use of new technologies for learning; and (e) support countries in ensuring that the potential gains from the production and use of new technologies are broadly shared, reducing existing inequalities and promoting inclusive learning opportunities.

47. The Committee welcomed the paper and its recommendations. In the ensuing discussion, it underscored that, while technology was instrumental in promoting education and learning, the drivers in support of effective education systems to meet the Sustainable Development Goals were multidimensional, thus necessitating system-wide and cross-sectoral attention and engagement.

48. The Committee considered the fundamental shifts required in education and learning for the future in the overall context of supporting the 2030 Agenda, with an emphasis on its pledge to leave no one behind. Members suggested several factors and perspectives critical to enhancing the understanding of the United Nations system of learning and education in the era of innovative technologies and beyond. These included a growing need for lifelong learning and skills acquisition given the changing landscape of employment, as well as the evolving role of informal education and of teachers.

49. Members emphasized the importance of integrating into future education ethics and universal values so as to develop and deliver skills that could help to reduce inequalities, enhance inclusion, promote social cohesion and, thus, ultimately prevent conflict. It was suggested that, in the context of the "four Cs" of twenty-first century

learning, namely, communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, the fifth C could be core values/civics. The role of new educational technologies in advancing these goals and values was underscored.

50. The Committee also underscored the critical role of Governments in ensuring equitable and inclusive access to education, as well as of effective private-public partnerships in financing and delivering education outcomes. The Committee underscored the role of the United Nations system in supporting Member States to pursue appropriate and effective policy choices that best fit their specific challenges and circumstances.

51. The Committee agreed that the United Nations system had an important role in promoting the "future of learning and education we want" by promoting and supporting an inclusive, equitable and innovative approach. Recognizing that this would require an integrated and holistic approach to mobilize, enhance and coordinate the collective capacities and efforts of the United Nations system, the Committee was in favour of exploring the optimal way to pursue coordinated system-wide engagement on the basis of policy and programmatic coherence, and asked UNESCO and UNICEF to continue to lead the initiative towards this objective.

52. In closing, the Chair reiterated the Committee's recognition that new technologies had the potential to have a transformative effect on learning and education, but also posed the risk of widening the digital divide and resulting in deeper or new inequalities. There was broad agreement among members that the United Nations system had an important role in promoting an inclusive and equitable approach to integrating new technologies in education and learning and that the Committee could contribute to this end through the development of a system-wide approach to mobilize, enhance and coordinate the system's collective capacities and efforts. The Chair asked UNICEF and UNESCO to continue to lead the initiative and prepare, in cooperation with interested entities, an initial proposal for the Committee's thirty-sixth session.

Conclusion

53. **The Committee supported the analysis and recommendations put forward in the discussion paper and approved it, subject to the incorporation of the comments made, for onward submission to CEB as an input to its forthcoming session. The Committee requested UNICEF and UNESCO to lead an inter-agency process to prepare a proposal for system-wide engagement on this topic for consideration at its thirty-sixth session.**

VI. Future of food

54. In introducing the agenda item, the Chair recalled that the Committee, at its thirty-fourth session, had held an initial discussion on this topic on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the numerous and wide-ranging factors relevant to understanding the future landscape of food systems and the links to the 2030 Agenda. In order to expand its understanding of the transformative power of technologies and in response to the Board's directives for deep-dive analysis, the Committee was invited to review and provide feedback on a new and reoriented paper, prepared through an inter-agency consultative process under the leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and involving 17 United Nations entities, that specifically examined the future of food through the lens of frontier technologies and innovation and their impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

55. Michael Clark (FAO) introduced the discussion paper, underscoring that the future of food and the 2030 Agenda were closely interlinked by the need for an inclusive, equitable and sustainable rural transformation — a common agenda that could be described as the "future of food we want". Innovation and frontier technologies had the potential to be important drivers for such a structural transformation. Stressing that scientific and technological innovation offered important means for eradicating poverty, ending hunger and fostering inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic growth and development, the paper explored their game-changing power to engender transformations in food systems through three case studies: precision farming, genome editing/genetic engineering and distributed ledger. Given the possibility that the introduction of frontier technologies could be a source of instability and potential harm, there was a need for strong global consensus and attendant legal and policy regimes to improve monitoring and safeguards. The need for special attention to developing countries, in particular the rural poor and other vulnerable groups, was also emphasized.

56. Mr. Clark concluded by arguing that, in order to catalyse the evolution of food systems towards inclusive and sustainable development, the United Nations system must adapt to the challenges and opportunities posed by technologies. Acknowledging that the material role of the United Nations system in developing and applying frontier technologies was limited, the paper set out three strategic entry points for the United Nations system: (a) convene an international dialogue on how to unlock the potential of technologies for good and safeguard against their potential for harm; (b) engage private sector actors around United Nations norms and standards in order to strengthen the relevance and application of United Nations norms in commercial and privates practices; and (c) advocate rural transformation, and the role of food systems within it, as a key driver for inclusive structural transformation and sustainable development.

57. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed its deep appreciation for the well-researched and academically rigorous paper, which highlighted the potential of technological innovation to significantly advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the world's rural and semi-rural areas, end hunger and poverty and foster economic growth and sustainable development through rural transformation.

58. The Committee acknowledged that technology, though potentially transformative, was only one among several important dimensions of the future of food. Other aspects related to the broader sustainable development agenda, which were examined in depth in the analysis considered by the Committee at its previous session, remained equally critical when looked at from a more comprehensive perspective. In this context, members highlighted in particular issues of governance, demographic changes, social dynamics, population movements, conflict and environmental and climate factors, all of which needed to be taken into account holistically in the broader concept of food systems. It was observed that the paper addressed the broader scope of overcoming the challenges to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition and making agriculture and food systems sustainable, and it was suggested that this be reflected in the title of the paper. The Committee strongly recognized, however, that innovation enabled by science and technologies offered many transformative possibilities in this regard.

59. Several members highlighted the links between increased productivity and economic development and access to basic technology, including the need for investment in infrastructure, electricity and broadband, recalling that this same point had been underscored in the context of the earlier discussion on artificial intelligence. Furthermore, it was noted that a targeted analysis was needed to assess the specific impact and opportunities of new technologies for developing countries in general and

the least developed countries in particular to inform and complement the analysis contained in the paper.

60. Noting rural-urban links and the connection between growing urbanization and rural transformation, members pointed to the importance of creating jobs and economic opportunities outside agriculture and food production with the help of new technologies. Urban farming and vertical agriculture were additional innovations that could be further explored. In addition to focusing on means to increase the quantity of food through efficiency gains in food production, processing and marketing, the Committee underlined the need to consider issues related to the quality of food, including improvements in nutrition, the diversification of diets and healthy eating habits supported by sustainable production and consumption.

61. Leaving no one behind was a central paradigm of the 2030 Agenda. Both Governments and the United Nations system had a role to play in ensuring that the process of rural transformation, especially when powered by new technologies, was inclusive and did not further exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. The role of rural youth and female farmers and entrepreneurs was emphasized in this context. It was suggested that, building upon the analysis contained in the paper, the application of technological innovation at the country level and its potential for fostering inclusive rural transformation and sustainable development that leaves no one behind should be further explored.

62. Promoting inclusive, equitable and sustainable food system transformations, including the equitable distribution of food, using the power of new technologies together with other important drivers required astute policy choices by Governments, as did the regulatory control of harmful technologies. In this regard, the Committee underscored the normative and policy advisory role of the United Nations system in support of the efforts of Member States, as highlighted during the Committee's previous session. In addition, members noted the convening role of the United Nations and the need to use existing United Nations platforms to deepen the dialogue among different stakeholders, in particular scientists and policymakers, to maximize the benefits of new technologies for the "future of food we want", while safeguarding against potential harm.

63. Mr. Clark thanked the Committee for the rich feedback and insightful comments provided on the paper. Stressing that the paper had been intended primarily to stimulate thought and debate with a very specific focus on the implications of emerging technologies for the future of food in the context of supporting the Sustainable Development Goals, he noted that technological innovation represented only one, albeit important, aspect of a fuller, more comprehensive analysis of the multidimensional complexity of food systems and the future of food. With a projected increase of 50 per cent in demand for food and agricultural products from 2012 to 2050, integrating the 2.5 billion family farmers and small-scale rural entrepreneurs and young people into the process of rural transformation would be key, requiring a variety of pathways and entry points.

64. In closing, the Chair reiterated the Committee's strong appreciation and broad support for the analysis and recommendations contained in the paper. With the finalization of the discussion paper for CEB, this workstream was now considered completed. Nevertheless, the Chair noted that this important topic merited the Committee's continued attention and proposed that the broader issues raised during the discussion might be addressed separately, as appropriate, through the Committee's other ongoing or future analytical work.

Conclusion

65. **On the basis of the Committee's deliberations, the discussion paper on the future of food will be finalized for onward submission to CEB as an input for its forthcoming discussion on the socioeconomic implications of the fourth industrial revolution on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for further guidance.**

Scoping consultations with new partners

VII. Policy dialogue with the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth and the Young United Nations network

66. Recalling that the Committee had previously noted the need to forge connections with young people as advocates for and partners in the work of the United Nations, the Chair welcomed the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, and representatives of the Young United Nations network as special guests to engage in dialogue with the Committee. The aim of the dialogue, which was a novel effort by the Committee to reach out beyond its immediate membership, was to bring fresh perspectives and new ideas to the Committee's work. It was hoped that it would serve as the first step towards the meaningful and inclusive participation of young people in the Committee's deliberations.

67. Highlighting her responsibility to bring the United Nations closer to young people and young people closer to the United Nations, Ms. Wickramanayake recalled her warning to CEB at its session in November 2017 that, in a world marked by a rapidly changing global environment and power dynamics, where over half of the population was under the age of 30, the United Nations could not afford not to include young people. It would be critical to substantially reshape the way United Nations entities worked with and for young people; otherwise, it would be young people who would leave the United Nations behind. Ms. Wickramanayake commended the Committee for its initiative to engage and solicit views from younger staff and expressed hope that this would lead to inputs from young people featuring regularly in the Committee's deliberations.

68. The Chair invited representatives of the Young United Nations network, present in person or through videoconference from Bangkok and Geneva, to highlight key observations and recommendations that had emerged from their consultations, including: (a) policy factors, proposed to be integrated into the Committee's four current deep-dive analyses; (b) policy priorities, proposed as additional frontier themes for the Committee's future consideration; and (c) ideas for change, proposed to promote ways of doing things differently within the United Nations system, including greater engagement with young people.

69. Introducing the network of more than 700 staff from across the United Nations system located in 80 duty stations, representatives of the Young United Nations network explained that the network was a bottom-up movement for cultural and mindset change and a solutions-oriented partner for reform, able to make collective contributions by quickly crowdsourcing ideas and piloting changes. Aspiring to positively influence policy decisions in the Committee and other forums, they called upon senior management to be change makers and create space for innovative thinking and experimentation within their organizations, as outlined in the United Nations system leadership framework endorsed by CEB in April 2017.[1]

[1] See www.unsceb.org/content/leadership.

70. Presenting their analytical paper, the representatives of the Young United Nations network observed that their views on the deep-dive topics aligned largely with those of the Committee, but that they had taken an integrated approach when conducting their analysis, with an emphasis on the interconnections among the subjects. Presenting some key points of their contributions, the representatives stressed the need for the United Nations to offer different responses to the changes of the scale that frontier technologies would bring. It was highlighted that the United Nations should continue to fulfil its norm-setting role and pursue innovative models for international agreements and frameworks. With respect to artificial intelligence and other frontier technologies, traditional treaty models might not be adequate to influence key players, and new accountability instruments such as global compacts or rating systems could provide for appropriately flexible international arrangements. Policy responses might also be necessary to roll back frontier technologies that unfolded in unwanted ways.

71. The representatives of the Young United Nations network emphasized that frontier technologies, while bringing formidable challenges, also presented opportunities to enhance the work of the United Nations system in many ways, in particular by boosting the efficiency of United Nations operations, expanding the evidence base and increasing impact. Indeed, their adoption could become a testing ground for the relevance of the United Nations. Their successful adoption depended on the buy-in of senior management, the ability of the system to expand alliances with the private sector, the training of staff to better leverage new technologies and the establishment of conducive internal policies and structures. Initiatives to identify trends that might have an impact on the work of the United Nations should be multiplied across the United Nations system. A central capacity to respond to megatrends could also be considered.

72. In the ensuing dialogue, the Committee recognized and appreciated the value-added inputs and creative suggestions that the representatives of the Young United Nations network had contributed, noting that they complemented the Committee's discussions to date and offered a number of new angles. Members expressed appreciation for the invigorating, fluid and forward-looking conversation, which contributed to the sense of energy and optimism at the Committee's session. They welcomed the absence in the presentation by the Young United Nations network of simplistic and discriminatory formulations, which had sometimes been used to paint younger persons negatively or positively. The value of a human rights-based and intergenerational approach was recognized, as was the rejection of stereotyping any age group.

73. The Committee responded positively to the appeal of the Young United Nations network for managers to create space in their working methods and procedures for younger staff to contribute, agreeing with the need to break down hierarchy and bureaucracy and promote innovation. In that regard, several members called attention to various youth-focused initiatives that existed within their organizations or of experiences in engaging younger staff in particular processes. In cases where managers were not proactively creating such opportunities for younger staff, Committee members encouraged the representatives of the Young United Nations network to push within their organizations to have their ideas heard. From the point of view of the representatives of the network, multidimensional learning across hierarchies and a culture of accepting failure often seemed to be missing. As a practical and economical way of changing this, it was suggested that managers could fill knowledge gaps by reaching out to and learning from more junior staff. Members supported this small but important behavioural change and, in that vein, expressed interest specifically in engaging with the network on enhancing the ability of United

Nations staff to leverage new technologies, as well as on helping to increase the risk appetite and embrace innovation within the system.

74. In this vein, members strongly supported having the Committee continue to benefit from the perspectives of younger staff, noting that it was refreshing to hear their views and important for the system to practise inclusiveness. A suggestion was made that, as a future contribution to the Committee, the Young United Nations network could prepare a think piece on the United Nations system of the future. Value was seen in seeking the input of younger staff in other forums, such as the High-level Committee on Management and the forthcoming Artificial Intelligence for Good Global Summit. The representative of the Peacebuilding Support Office suggested that younger staff could be engaged in the decision-making process to allocate funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, and the representative of Global Pulse alluded to the possibility of secondments to the lab that the Secretary-General had established in his Office. These opportunities were welcomed by the Young United Nations network.

75. With regard to the deep-dive analysis topics, the representatives of the Young United Nations network stressed that the discussion should not be about technology, but about human needs. Design thinking methodology was focused on the user, making the development of solutions about empathy, not technology. This reminder of the human dimension of frontier technologies was welcomed by the High-level Committee on Programmes.

76. The emphasis in the input of the Young United Nations network on skills and the centrality of education, especially tertiary, technical and vocational education, was appreciated, and an opportunity to work with the network on the subject of education as a public good was highlighted. The representatives of the network observed that the fundamental values behind education and learning needed to be reconsidered as artificial intelligence was expected to erase many current jobs and that a shift from traditional schooling towards a focus on adaptable foundational skills, including digital literacy, ethics and critical thinking, would be required. Peer-to-peer learning models would be important in the future of education. Furthermore, the view was expressed that algorithms, which would increasingly influence people's lives, should be taught human values and empathy, which required a deep understanding of humanity. Legal and ethical considerations had to be at the heart of this to avoid bias.

77. Echoing the importance of the engagement by the United Nations with non-State partners, members saw younger staff as possible connectors to the private sector, social movements, community activists and other stakeholder groups, including youth groups outside the system. The representatives of the Young United Nations network also noted the need to create new platforms for youth collaboration including stakeholders such as Member States, civil society, the private sector and beneficiaries of the work of the United Nations. They stressed that the network functioned in an open way and was already building links across themes and with different stakeholders and could therefore provide a space for multidisciplinary discussions to move beyond traditional silos. Specifically, within the United Nations system, the perceived disconnect between Headquarters and the field could be remedied by applying a mechanism resembling a circular economic model to channel existing innovative initiatives from the field back to Headquarters and vice versa.

78. In conclusion, the representatives of the Young United Nations network observed that the world was in the midst of a period of exponential change and that the United Nations system too would have to change if it wanted to continue to have an impact. New technologies were already touching lives around the globe, and United Nations organizations needed to improve their understanding of how to

respond to them and what investments were needed. The representatives reaffirmed the network's willingness to contribute regularly to the Committee's work to help to project some of the new ways of working that could be more reflective of a United Nations fit for the future. Ms. Wickramanayake reiterated her appeal to Committee members, as senior managers, to foster opportunities for younger staff to thrive, to provide constructive feedback and to contribute to innovation.

79. The Chair thanked the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth and the representatives of the Young United Nations network for their valuable contributions to the Committee's proceedings. He requested the entities leading the deep-dive analyses to incorporate relevant points in finalizing their respective papers and to reflect them, as appropriate, in the continuing work to develop the system-wide responses under each topic. He indicated that the Committee would consider taking up some of the new issues raised and requested the secretariat of the Committee to appropriately take these into account in the Committee's future work. Noting the Committee's desire to build upon this successful dialogue, the Chair also requested the secretariat to appropriately reflect regular youth engagement in the Committee's future work modalities. He committed himself to relaying to CEB the nature, substance and value of the dialogue between the Committee and the Young United Nations network and encouraged members to explore opportunities to promote similar engagement in their individual organizations in order to serve as drivers of positive change.

Conclusion

80. **The Committee requested the lead entities of the ongoing deep-dive initiatives to incorporate relevant points raised during this dialogue into their current and future efforts. The Committee decided to continue to bring a youth perspective regularly into its work and requested the secretariat of the Committee to ensure this through appropriate modalities.**

Information/transactional topics

VIII. Summary of information items: Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

81. Further to its electronic review and endorsement in advance of the session, the Committee took note of an intersessional progress report on the ongoing effort to mainstream the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 into the work programmes of United Nations system organizations, submitted by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (see annex III).

IX. Other matters: dates and location of the thirty-sixth session of the Committee

82. The Chair of the Committee proposed the dates of 9 and 10 October 2018 for the Committee's thirty-sixth session, to be hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development at its headquarters in Rome.

Conclusion

83. **The Committee approved the dates and location of its thirty-sixth session: 9 and 10 October 2018 at International Fund for Agricultural Development headquarters in Rome.**

X. Conclusion

84. In concluding, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the Committee for its continuous commitment to transcending individual institutional mandates and positions and for pursuing strategic and integrated discussions through system-wide perspectives. The Committee was responding adroitly to the Secretary-General's vision to serve as a think tank for the entire United Nations system and advance thought leadership on the current and emerging challenges faced by the international community. He encouraged the Committee to explore areas for further strengthening of its work, in particular with regard to the delivery of concrete outcomes for enhancing system-wide policy coherence and programmatic coordination.

Annex I

Agenda

United Nations engagement on frontier technologies

1. Contributions of the High-level Committee on Programmes to United Nations engagement on frontier technologies.

Deep-dive analyses on frontier issues

2. Artificial intelligence.
3. Future of work.
4. Future of learning and education.
5. Future of food.

Scoping consultations with new partners

6. Policy dialogue with the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth and the Young United Nations network.

Information/transactional topics

7. Summary of information items: Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020.
8. Other matters: dates and location of the thirty-sixth session of the Committee.

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Guy Ryder (International Labour Organization)

Secretary: Kayoko Gotoh (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

United Nations	
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Ayaka Suzuki
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Marion Barthelemy
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Hansjoerg Strohmeyer
Department of Political Affairs	Roselyn Akombe
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Craig Mokhiber
Regional commissions	Amr Nour
Peacebuilding Support Office	Oscar Fernandez-Taranco
Global Pulse	Robert Kirkpatrick Josiane Toundzi Dzouankeu
International Labour Organization	André Bogui Sangheon Lee Vinicius Pinheiro Shengjie Li
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	Carla Mucavi Michael Clark
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Marie-Ange Théobald Jordan Naidoo Marie Paule Roudil
World Health Organization	Nata Menabde Ivana Milovanovic
World Bank Group	Bjorn Erik Gillsater Nicholas Bian
International Monetary Fund	Christopher Lane
Universal Postal Union	Abdellatif Meskine
International Civil Aviation Organization	Mitchell Fox
International Telecommunication Union	Doreen Bogdan-Martin Preetam Maloor Ursula Wynhoven
World Meteorological Organization	Paul Egerton
International Maritime Organization	Sung-Jin Kim

World Intellectual Property Organization	Melissa Marrero
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Torben Nilsson Zak Bleicher
United National Industrial Development Organization	Paul Maseli
World Tourism Organization	Zoritsa Urosevic Kazi Rahman
International Atomic Energy Agency	Tracy Brown
International Organization for Migration	Ashraf El Nour
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Chantal-line Carpentier
United Nations Development Programme	Abdoulaye Mar Dieye
United Nations Environment Programme	Maaike Jansen
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Andrew Harper Ninette Kelley Michelle Cervantes
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Peter Mulrean
United Nations Children's Fund	Ted Chaiban Jo Bourne Juan Pablo Giraldo Ospino Madhavi Ashok Solome Zemene
United Nations Population Fund	Ramiz Alakbarov Alexander Pak
World Food Programme	Stanlake Samkange Coco Ushiyama
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Gillian Murray
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Christopher Williams
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	Aparna Mehrotra Nicole van Huyssteen Sharon Taylor
United Nations University	James Cockayne Christina McElwaine Eleonore Pauwels
United Nations System Staff College	Claire Messina
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Simon Bland Gang Sun
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	José Rosemberg

Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth	Jayathma Wickramanayake
United Nations Innovation Network	Robert Opp
Young United Nations network	Kirit Patel Ozge Aydogan Heidrun Fritze Tiina Elise Neuvonen Ruth Blackshaw (by videoconference from Geneva) Arun Jacob (by videoconference from Bangkok) Melissa Amanda Archer (by videoconference from Bangkok) Siaw Yong (by videoconference from Bangkok) Eduardo Belinchon De La Banda (teleconference) Hanife Cakici (teleconference) Svenja Angela Rauch (teleconference)
Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Simona Petrova Federica Pietracci Xenia von Lilien Cheryl Stafford Silvan Scheiwiller

Annex III

Progress report on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020: investment promotion for the least developed countries

Prepared by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

I. Background

1. In the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, in May 2016, Member States invited the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to include the issue of investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries in the agenda of the Board, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations system support that could contribute to enhancing the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries and their ability to attract such investment (see General Assembly resolution 70/294, annex, para. 69). The invitation was reiterated in paragraph 23 of General Assembly resolution 71/238. In paragraph 24 of the same resolution, Member States reiterated the invitation to the Economic and Social Council to discuss investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries at the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up. In the conclusions and recommendations of the 2017 forum on financing for development follow-up (see E/FFDF/2017/3), Member States encouraged an increase in the volume, quality, diversification and long-term nature of foreign direct investment to all developing countries, with specific reference to the least developed countries, including through strengthening investment promotion regimes, strategies and agencies, as well as addressing the problem of the scale of the market and the size of projects as obstacles to foreign direct investment.

2. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) prepared a set of short, pragmatic recommendations intended to help to increase the coverage, scope and effectiveness of the support of the United Nations system for investment promotion for the least developed countries. The recommendations were taken note of by the High-Level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-third session (16 and 17 March 2017) and subsequently by the Board at its first regular session of 2017 (26 and 27 April 2017).

II. Activities to date

3. The recommendations put forward by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and UNCTAD included the creation of an inter-agency technical committee. The first meeting of this committee took place on 21 September 2017 at United Nations Headquarters. Representatives of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States, the International Labour Organization, UNCTAD, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as well as the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the United Nations Office for Project Services were in attendance. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and UNCTAD hosted, in the morning of 21 September 2017, a dialogue in which all members of the inter-agency technical committee presented their approach to investment promotion for the least developed countries. Several representatives of least developed countries highlighted their needs and priorities in the area of investment promotion, thus informing the deliberations of the committee on the capacity development programme for investment promotion agencies for the least developed countries.

4. In keeping with the recommendations referred to in paragraph 2 above, the inter-agency technical committee discussed the following matters:

(a) A proposal for an Internet-based tool to increase and facilitate the sharing of information on investment promotion activities prepared by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The Office collected comments and is currently working with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to host the proposed online platform in accordance with the cybersecurity and accessibility standards of the United Nations Secretariat and relevant technical requirements;

(b) A draft project proposal for a dedicated capacity development programme for investment promotion agencies for the least developed countries. Comments from members of the inter-agency technical committee have been incorporated into the concept note and fundraising activities are about to be launched (in the Ministerial Declaration of the seventh UNIDO Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries, held in Vienna on 23 and 24 November 2017, the relevant United Nations agencies were encouraged to establish a capacity development programme for the least developed countries in order for investment promotion agencies to attract, diversify and retain sustainable foreign direct investment and derive maximum benefit from it);

(c) An investment monitor for the least developed countries to annually provide analysis and updates on investment trends, opportunities and challenges in the least developed countries. The first issue, prepared by UNCTAD, came out in September 2017.[1] It was agreed that the next issue would be released in October 2018 during the UNCTAD World Investment Forum. It was further agreed that members of the inter-agency technical committee would endeavour to contribute to the preparation of the monitor by providing relevant analysis;

(d) The organization of a high-level ministerial and business executive round table on mobilizing investment in the least developed countries for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals during the UNCTAD World Investment Forum, which will take place from 22 to 25 October 2018. The round table is scheduled for 24 October at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

III. Other noteworthy activities

5. In addition to the above-mentioned activities related to investment promotion, another noteworthy area of ongoing effort relates to the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third

[1] Available from http://greenfdi.org/images/UNCTAD-Issues-Note-FDI-in-LDCs-2017.pdf.

International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reiterated the call from the Istanbul Programme of Action for the creation of a technology bank for the least developed countries. On 23 December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly established the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries. In September 2017, the United Nations and the Government of Turkey signed the host country agreement and a contribution agreement, and in November, the Governing Council of the Technology Bank adopted the programme of work and budget for 2018. During its first year of work, the Technology Bank, in collaboration with other United Nations entities, including UNCTAD and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, will focus on preparing science, technology and innovation reviews and technology needs assessments, and on promoting digital access to research and technical knowledge in selected least developed countries.